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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

2 August 1951

Memorandum for the Director of Central Intelligence

Subject: Re-examination of Announced Communist Strategy
in Asia, in Light of the Korean Conflict

A program for Communist conquest of Asia from Iran eastward, including the adjacent island areas, was promulgated in the November 1949 Peiping meeting of the so-called "Trade Union Conference of Asian and Australian Countries," sponsored by the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU).

The conference "ratified" a plan of revolutionary action on a country-by-country basis to be carried out by the Communist parties of individual areas, primarily with indigenous forces. The principal provisions of the plan were as follows:

- a. Asia was divided into three blocs: (1) the "base" areas: the USSR, China, and North Korea; (2) the "vulnerable" countries: Vietnam, South Korea, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Malaya; and (3) the "less vulnerable" countries: Iran, Pakistan, India, Ceylon, Burma, and Japan.
- b. There were two phases in the Communist conquest of each country: (1) the struggle for obtaining

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national military power; and (2) the use of that power to establish local Communist rule under an "urban proletariat." Regarding the first phase, it was pointed out to the delegates by Chinese Communist ideologist Liu Shao ch'i that, while gradual isolation and subversion were useful in initiating conquest, "armed struggle can, and must be, the main form" of the struggle in "many colonial and semi-colonial areas."

- c. A "WFTU Liaison Bureau" for Asia was established in Peiping with a directing committee of Soviet, Chinese, Indian, and Australian representatives under Chinese chairmanship. Although little is known of its activities, the Liaison Bureau was presumably created to coordinate Communist activities in Asia.

The Communist-led revolt in Indochina was already in progress at the time of the Peiping conference, and the North Korean assault on South Korea began seven months later. However, neither operation has yet achieved success, and the reaction of the non-Communist world to the North Korean aggression, together with other developments within Asia itself, may have brought about some modification in the Peiping plan.

In particular, there may have been some redistribution of priority tags. Apparent Communist willingness to settle the Korean conflict suggests that the Communists are now prepared to postpone South Korea's addition to the Communist world. The failure of the Viet Minh to break the military stalemate in Indochina may have set back Communist hopes for using it as a base to spread into Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Malaya. One or more of these last four, together with Korea,

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may thus have been transferred to the list of "less vulnerable" countries, while developments in Iran and Burma may have prompted their transfer to the "vulnerable" list.

More important, the development of the Korean war may have led to some revisions in tactics. The attack of North Korean forces in June 1950 was consistent with the dictum that armed struggle, primarily with indigenous forces, should be the main form, but in this case the "civil war" disguise was too thin to prevent UN intervention. Therefore in the future, if the Korean lesson is heeded, greater efforts may be made to preserve the indigenous nature of the revolutionary struggle in hopes of forestalling foreign intervention.

The introduction of Chinese "volunteers" in large numbers and in regular units may have been a revision of the original plan dictated by necessity. In one sense this tactic proved not to be fraught with those serious dangers which presumably prompted its avoidance in the original plan; the war was not extended to China. On the other hand, it has had profound secondary effects; it focused attention upon Communist intentions in the Far East and made clear the extensive dynamism underlying the Communist program. The result was a new awareness in the West, particularly in the US, of the Communist threat and a corollary stiffening of Western policy which threatens successful execution of the entire Communist program. Therefore, unless the Communists are prepared to accept the consequences of further deterioration of relations with the West and attendant risks of general war, they may limit the scale and nature of future "volunteer" assistance in order to reduce the likelihood of Western counteraction against the country providing such aid.

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Nevertheless, whatever the tactical modifications, there is no reason to believe that the Communists have altered or will alter their basic strategy for achieving their objective of expelling Western influence from Asia. In fact, the initial reaction of Chinese Communist leaders to the Malik cease-fire proposal contained a strong restatement and reaffirmation of the dictum that only by revolutionary armed struggle can the peoples of Asia achieve "national liberation."



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